

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 025696

62

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 025696

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, US, UR

SUBJECT: PEKING ATTACK ON ANTONIONI FILM

BANGKOK FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: A) HONG KONG 1063 (NOTAL)

B) HONG KONG 1175 (NOTAL)

C) PEKING 0200 (NOTAL)

1. DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH HONG KONG THAT PEOPLE'S DAILY
"COMMENTATOR" ATTACK ON ANTONIONI'S "CHINA" MAY HAVE
IMPLICATIONS FOR INFORMATION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE. BUT
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PAGE 02 STATE 025696

WE DO NOT/NOT SHARE THE VIEW IN EITHER REF A OR B THAT

PEKING IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT ANTI-CHINA SENTIMENT LINGERING IN THE US. IN FACT, ONE "REASSURING" FEATURE OF THE ARTICLE IS ITS ENDORSEMENT OF "CHAIRMAN MAO'S REVOLUTIONARY LINE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS," THE CODEWORD FOR US-PRC DETENTE. PRAISE FOR THAT LINE HAD BEEN MISSING FROM 10TH PARTY CONGRESS RHETORIC BUT HAD REAPPEARED IN THE NEW YEAR'S EDITORIAL.

2. WHILE THE SCORCHING ATTACK ON THE "SOVIET REVISIONIST RENEGADE CLIQUE" AS THE "SPEARHEAD AND CHIEF BOSS BEHIND THE SCENES IN INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CHINA ACTIVITIES" IS NOTABLE AND CONSISTENT WITH RECENT PRC TREATMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE KREMLIN, WE THINK THE ARTICLE IS MORE

DOMESTICALLY ORIENTED AND IS OF A PIECE WITH RECENT ARTICLES CHARGING LIN PIAO (AND OTHERS?) WITH ATTACKING THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND POLICY DIRECTION OF THE NEW SOCIALIST CHINA.

3. AN INTERESTING FACET OF THE PRC HANDLING OF THE ARTICLE IS THAT IT WAS MAILED BY THE PRCLO AND PRCMUN TO JOURNALISTS, ACADEMICS, AND OTHER CHINA SPECIALISTS AROUND THE COUNTRY. IT MAY, OF COURSE, BE MEANT TO CONVEY TO THEM THE MESSAGE SUGGESTED BY REF C, I.E., WHEN YOU PEOPLE GO TO CHINA YOU HAD BETTER CONCERN YOURSELVES WITH THE NEW CHINA OR ELSE. THE EFFECT ON SOME JOURNALISTS HERE, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN TO COMPOUND THEIR INCLINATION TO SEE IN THE ARTICLE A RESURGENCE OF THE LEFT, A VIEW WE DO NOT/NOT SHARE. THUS, THE MFA, WHICH PRESUMABLY AUTHORIZED THE PRCLO AND PRCMUN MAILING, MAY BE DISMAYED TO SEE ARTICLES BEGIN TO APPEAR WHICH DESCRIBE CHINA AS IN CHAOS OR AT LEAST ON THE BRINK.

4. WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO TRACK DOWN THE LEVEL OF APPROVAL GIVEN IN PEKING TO ANTONIONI'S PROJECT IN THE FIRST PLACE. THUS FAR WE HAVE ONLY DETERMINED THAT HE WAS INVITED BY THE "CHINESE GOVERNMENT" TO DO IT AND THAT THE PRC PRESS PEOPLE IN ROME VIEWED THE RESULTS BEFORE THE FILM WAS RELEASED AND SEEMED QUITE PLEASED. WHEN THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 025696

ABC TEAM WAS IN CHINA LAST OCTOBER, THEY WERE TOLD BY THEIR ESCORTS THAT WHAT ABC WAS DOING THEN, I.E., REPORTING ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE "NEW CHINA," WAS FAR BETTER THAN THE ANTONIONI FILM WHICH HAD BEEN VAGUE AND ILL-DEFINED.
RUSH

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